

U.S.S. DELTA (AR-9)
FPO San Francisco 96601

1 January 1967

SHIP'S HISTORY

DELTA was built as SS HAWAIIAN PACKER and originally designed for commercial use on the "pineapple run" between San Francisco and Honolulu. Before completion she was acquired by the Navy. She was commissioned in June 1941 as a Cargo Ship (AK-29) and during her first year of service, made runs to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, Iceland, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia.

On 1 July 1942 she was placed in a reserve status for conversion to a Fleet Repair Ship at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In her new capacity she sailed on 3 March 1943 to join a convoy headed for North Africa.

The convoy reached Mers-El-Kebir, Oran on 19 March and DELTA moored alongside the mole where she immediately set to work repairing amphibious craft. During a short three months there she put in a total of 110,800 man-hours working on 467 ships. With the opening of the Sicilian and Italian campaigns, DELTA moved to Bizerte, Tunisia, late in July 1943. The following month, despite a series of air attacks by the Luftwaffe, she worked on 248 ships and amphibious craft. The air raids reached their climax on the night of 6 September. One of the planes shot down on that occasion was definitely credited to DELTA and another was recorded as a possible.

As the war moved so did DELTA. She set up shop in Palermo, Sicily, in March 1944 and at Pozzuoli, Italy, that July. At Pozzuoli her job was to get ships and landing craft ready for the invasion of Southern France. From there she went to Naples, Italy, in August to repair the damaged amphibians.

On the last day of September 1944 the hard-working AR steamed for Bizerte, via Palermo, to repair landing craft being returned to the United States. She did that until November, when she was detached from the amphibians and returned to Mers-El-Kebir for duty as a destroyer repair ship for Commander Destroyer Squadron Sixteen.

In April, 1945 DELTA arrived back in the States--but not for long. After armament modifications and general repairs, she left Norfolk, Virginia on 15 June 1945 for Pearl Harbor, via the Panama Canal. She reached Pearl on 6 July 1945, worked there for a month and then sailed for Eniwetok on 5 August.

The surrender of Japan was announced while DELTA was at Eniwetok. She was ordered to rendezvous with Commander Task Group 30.8 off the Islands of Japan and on 28 August she entered the Sagami Sea with advance units. Two days later she moored off Yokosuka Naval Base, where she was assigned to general Fleet repair work. One of the jobs she did there was to get the Japanese battleship NAGATO in shape for the 1946 Atomic Bomb tests at Bikini. She saw China Service in the year following the war's end.

In August 1946 DELTA was placed out of commission, remaining in that status until the Korean conflict. She was put back into commission on 1 November 1950 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and, after her shakedown, left the East Coast in February 1951 for duty in the Pacific Fleet at San Diego, California under Commander Service Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

After working out of San Diego for more than a year, DELTA headed overseas in June 1952 to set up shop at Yokosuka, Japan. There she was part of Service Squadron Three, supporting the United Nations Naval Forces in the Far East. In September she was assigned to Task Force Seventy-Seven.

In February 1953 DELTA returned to the West Coast. She operated out of San Diego and Long Beach, California for the next seven months, then went back to the Far East. This time she saw service at Sasebo and Yokosuka, Japan and at Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. In July 1954 she returned to San Diego where she joined Service Squadron One.

On DELTA's next Far East tour, which began in January 1955, she spent part of her time as the Flagship of Commander Blockading and Escort Force, Pacific Fleet. She returned to the West Coast that July and the following month was ordered to the yard at Puget Sound, Washington for deactivation. She was decommissioned on 1 December 1955 and became a unit of the Bremerton Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet.

Cold war was the word of the day for the next few years. World tensions increased and so did the need for more mobile repair facilities around the Pacific Fleet. On 31 October 1959 the DELTA was recommissioned by the crew of the USS KERMIT ROOSEVELT, an internal combustion repair ship, at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington. She immediately sailed for Long Beach, California which was assigned as her new homeport.

Her stay at home was short lived. On 12 April 1960 she sailed once again for the Far East. As a unit of the U. S. Seventh Fleet and Service Squadron Three she provided repair service in Sasebo and Iwakuni, Japan and in Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. On 21 December 1960 she returned to Long Beach for what was expected to be an eighteen month stay.

Again the need for a Repair Ship in the Far East sent DELTA back to the Western Pacific on short notice. This time she departed CONUS on 2 February 1962 and provided repair services in Sasebo, Okinawa and Subic Bay. Work was accomplished on Seventh Fleet Ships supporting the U. S. Forces in Thailand and the Taiwan Patrol Forces. DELTA returned from this Far East Cruise on 20 August 1962.

From August 1962 until Christmas Day 1963 DELTA provided repair services to the ships homeported in Long Beach. On the 26th of December DELTA deployed to the Far East, this time providing repair services in Subic Bay, Sasebo, Iwakuni and Yokosuka.

While in the Western Pacific the DELTA not only served the fleet, but acted as a good will ambassador for the United States in Hong Kong and Moji, Japan with outstanding success.

With her tour completed, DELTA returned to Long Beach for a long awaited overhaul. Upon completion of her yard period, the DELTA again became the work horse of the fleet by rendering her time and talents in repairing units of the fleet homeported in Long Beach.

On 1 July 1965, the homeport of DELTA was officially changed to Alameda, California, and on 22 July 1965 DELTA deployed again to the Western Pacific, providing repair services to ships of the U. S. Seventh Fleet in such ports as Yokosuka, Subic Bay, Manila, and Kaohsiung, Taiwan. DELTA arrived at her new homeport at Alameda, California on 15 March 1966, and since then has flown the flag of Commander Service Squadron Seven while serving the repair needs of the U. S. First Fleet. On 2 August 1966, DELTA represented Navy ships from the San Francisco area in the Seattle Sea Fair, returning to Alameda on 12 August 1966.

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U.S.S. DELTA (AR-9)
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94601

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Ser: 218

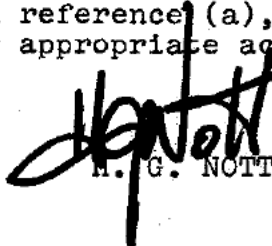
From: Commanding Officer, USS DELTA (AR-9) MAR 06 1969
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History; forwarding of (OPNAV 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) Command History of USS DELTA (AR-9)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is herewith forwarded for appropriate action.


H. G. NOTT

Copy to: (w/encl)
CINCPACFLT

USS DELTA (AR-9)
WFO San Francisco 96601

1 March 1969

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After working out of San Diego for more than a year, DELTA headed overseas in June 1952 to set up shop at Yokosuka, Japan. There she was part of Service Squadron THREE, supporting the United Nations Naval Forces in the Far East. In September she was assigned to Task Force Seventy-Seven.

In February 1953 DELTA returned to the West Coast. She operated out of San Diego and Long Beach, California for the next seven months, then went back to the Far East. This time she saw service at Sasebo and Yokosuka, Japan and at Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. In July 1954 she returned to San Diego where she joined Service Squadron ONE.

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On 19 January 1967, DELTA set sail for her tenth overseas tour, her ninth to the Western Pacific, for duties in support of the Vietnam-exposed, but thankful ships of the U. S. Seventh Fleet. Upon her return to Alameda on 18 August 1967, DELTA had spent a total of eight years overseas away from the United States.

DELTA served during the year of 1968 in support of the U. S. First Fleet. She left her homeport of Alameda early in January to spend the first quarter of the year in the Long Beach area where her services were badly needed. She returned to Alameda in March only to return to Long Beach in May to serve there for two more months.

She was once again privileged to represent the many ships from the San Francisco area in the Seattle Seafair during the first week of August. Upon return to her homeport, she spent the rest of the year in support of Navy units there.

The jobs DELTA does for the operating forces of the Pacific Fleet range from tightening the smallest bolt to rebuilding boilers and engineering plants on the ships that she serves.

No matter what the job, DELTA does her best to help the rest, in keeping with her motto of DILIGENCE, DEPENDABILITY, DEXTERITY.

The auxiliary repair ship USS DELTA (AR-9) was built in 1941 by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co. Newport News, Va., as a Matson Line cargo ship, The "Hawaiian Packer". She was designed for use on "The Pineapple Run" between San Francisco and Honolulu, however before completion the United States entered World War Two and she was acquired by the U.S. Navy. She was commissioned the USS DELTA (AR-9), named after the star "DELTA", on 16 June 1941.

During her first year in the Navy, under the command of COMMANDER C.D. Headlee, DELTA carried cargo from points along the east coast to Cuba; Puerto Rico; Bermuda; Argentina; Newfoundland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Reykjuik, Iceland. Her days as an AK were far from boring or uneventful. Many times DELTA had narrow escapes from subs. On one particular night, DELTA was moored by a large chain to a pier in Iceland when a 130 mile-an-hour hurricane struck. After things settled down the DELTA had torn up the street for about two blocks, and the chains was buried under the paving. On 1 July 1942, DELTA was sent to Cramp Ship Yard Philadelphia, Penn. \$2,000,000 worth of material was collected and laid out for her conversion to fleet repair ship. On 3 March 1943, DELTA, now AR-9, headed for a convoy destined for North Africa. Instead of carrying cargo and supplies she now carried light and heavy machine shops, welding shops, printing shops, boat repair shops, blue print and photo laboratory, electrical shops, engraving shop, carpenter shop, foundry, radio repair, optical shop, sail loft and many other smaller shops.

DELTA arrived Oren, Algeria on 19 March 1943 and with her complement of 811 men and 34 officers immediately began to repair amphibious craft. During her 3 months there she repaired 476 ships expending 110,800 man hours. In July 1943 with the opening of Sicilian and Italian campaigns DELTA moved to Bizerte, Tunisia. The following month in spite of a series of attacks by the Luftwaffe she worked on 248 ships and amphibious craft expending 85,000 man hours. The air raids reached their climax on the night of 6 September. When the German planes came over in force. The DELTA manned her guns and shot down at least one German plane the first night. The DELTA became the target of several attacks, but she made it through unhurt.

During her stay in Bizerte the DELTA worked on two 12 hour shifts and served 2 sets of meals during a 24 hour period. Her most difficult repair job during this period was that of repairing the bow doors of an LST. The door had to be brought aboard; but as it slants in position on the LST, the exact angle had to be determined before work could start.

Another LST which had 16 shell hits and one bomb that went entirely through it was repaired in 6 days. One ship came in with its fire control system completely out of order and half the wiring disconnected in one form or another. Without plans DELTA repaired it in 5 days. One LST came back twice. Both times she had a bomb in her or through her hull.

Next DELTA moved to Palermo, Sicily. This was in 1944 after Italy had surrendered. On 5 February 1944 Captain Colin D. Headlee, USN received the Legion of Merit Medal for the excellent work the USS DELTA was doing.

On 13 April Captain Headlee was relieved by Commander Clarence F. Swanson, USN. Captain Headlee had hand picked his officers and men. Seven officers, including the Skipper had an aggregate of 208 years of Navy Service. The versatility of the crew that Commander Swanson was getting was unmatched anywhere in the Navy.

They were construction men, business men, jewelers and many old Navy men who could do anything conceivable and then some.

When the DELTA wasn't working the crew liked to shoot. There were at least 100 men capable of participating in shooting competition with other teams. The DELTA vied with teams from a Dutch ship, 2 British ships and the finest that a British anti-aircraft regiment could produce. In each instance she at least doubled the score of her opponents. The best on the ship was Lt. (b) (6) (SC), USN. He could regularly shoot matchsticks from the top of a target, explode live cartridges stuck in a bullseye and split playing cards edge wise with his .45 pistol.

The DELTA worked as a team and one which played a very important role in winning the war.

In November, 1944 DELTA returned to Algeria for duty as a destroyer repair ship for DESRON 16. In mid April 1945, she started her voyage home arriving 27 April 1945 at Norfolk. Her armament was modified and general repairs were accomplished. The 15th of June found DELTA again underway, this time to Pearl Harbor via the Panama Canal. She arrived in Pearl on the 6th of July 1945. Was there a month and then sailed for Eniwetok in the Marshall Is. on 5 August. After arriving on the 12th Japan surrendered. DELTA was then ordered to rendezvous with Commander Task Group 30.8 off the island of Japan. The 28th of August DELTA, with other advance units, entered Sagami Wan. Two days after she moved into Tokyo Bay, mooring off Yokosuka Naval Base. She was assigned to Commander Task Group 53.9 for general fleet repair work.

On 15 September 1945, Captain Edward B Rogers USN, relieved Commander Swanson as commanding officer. Commander Swanson was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for DELTA'S excellent work. During the invasion of Southern France in Sept 1944 DELTA earned two battle stars on the European-African-Middle East area service medal for her Tunisian operations, 19 MAR - 22 June 1943, and 23 June - 9 July 1943, and for her participation in the invasion of Southern France 15 Aug - 25 Sept 1944. She also earned the Navy Occupation Service Medal Asia, for the period from 2 Sept 1945 to 26 March 1946 and the China Service Medal for the period from 27 March to 3 June 1946.

While she was assigned at Yokosuka Naval Base she prepared the Japanese battleship NAGATO for the 1946 atomic bomb test at Bikini. As the war ended DELTA was in the China Sea Campaign stationed at Shanghai.

On 17 July 1946 DELTA arrived at Philadelphia where she went out of commission in August and placed in reserve 5 March 1947.

When the Korean conflict flared up DELTA was re-commissioned 1 November 1950 at Philadelphia Penn. She arrived in San Diego 9 March 1951 to provide repair services to Commander Service Force U.S. Pacific Fleet. After a year in San Diego, DELTA headed for Yokosuka, Japan to join Service Squadron 3, supporting the U.N. Naval Forces in the far east. In September she was transferred to Task Force 77. Her first deployment during the Korean conflict was from 25 June 1952 until 14 February 1953. Then DELTA returned to the west coast. She operated out of San Diego and Long Beach, California for the next seven months. Again she also participated in "Operation - Passage to Freedom", which was the evacuation of North Vietnam of Vietnamese scurrying south to freedom. After a short stay in the states DELTA came back again to the far east.

This time in Jan. 1955 she became the flagship of Commander Blockading and Escort Force, Pacific Fleet.

Returning in July to the west coast DELTA was ordered to the yard at Puget Sound, Washington for deactivation. Decommissioning ceremonies were held on the 1st day of December 1955 and she became a unit of Bremerton Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet. This time DELTA received a Battle Star for the Korean campaign.

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With the coming of 1970, DELTA was once again scheduled for decommissioning. In March she proceeded to Bremerton, Washington to undergo inactivation and to be placed once again in the Reserve Fleet.